

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) An intracanal shield for positioning entirely in the ear canal and capping the cavity of said ear canal, comprising:
a ~~conforming perimeter retention ring adapted to fit in a retaining manner along the cross-sectional~~ conform to the wall of the ear canal cavity,
a central porous member disposed within the retention ring having pores sized for allowing air to pass through said porous member to provide a circulated air flow in the ear canal sufficient to reduce an incidence of canal infection while preventing passage of fluids and solids therethrough,
~~wherein~~ said intracanal shield, when fitted in said retaining manner in the ear canal cavity, ~~being and~~ positioned laterally with respect to a miniature hearing device medically positioned in close proximity to the eardrum, ~~whereby to protect~~ protects said hearing device against penetration of fluids and debris through said porous member while allowing air-borne sounds to reach said hearing device.
2. (Original) The intracanal shield of claim 1, wherein said intracanal shield is separate from said canal hearing device for independent insertion and removal while said hearing device is positioned in-situ.
- Claim 3. (Cancelled).
4. (Currently amended) The intracanal shield of claim 1, wherein said central porous member is hydrophobic.
5. (Original) The intracanal shield of claim 1, wherein said porous member is oleophobic.

6. (Original) The intracanal shield of claim 1, wherein said porous member comprises a porous membrane.

7. (Original) The intracanal shield of claim 1, wherein said intracanal shield is composed of disposable material for cost-effective single use of said shield.

8. (Original) The intracanal shield of claim 1, wherein said shield is at least partially composed of polyurethane form.

9. (Currently amended) The intracanal shield of claim 1, wherein said shield is at least partially composed of a silicone material.

10. (Original) The intracanal shield of claim 1, wherein said pores are sized in the rage of 1 to 10 microns.

11. (Currently amended) The intracanal shield of claim 1, wherein the retention ring of said intracanal shield is shaped and dimensioned to be positioned deep in the ear canal past the hair and ceriman production area therein.

12. (Original) The intracanal shield of claim 1, wherein said intracanal shield has an oval cross sectional shape adapted to fit comfortably in a cross section of the ear canal.

13. (Currently amended) A hearing system fabricated and adapted to be positioned entirely in the ear canal for extended wear, said system comprising:
a hearing device assembled and dimensioned to be medially positioned in the ear canal; and

the intracanal shield of any one of claims 1 to 12.
~~an intracanal shield shaped and dimensioned to be laterally positioned with respect to said hearing device, so that said intracanal shield caps the cavity of said ear canal, said intracanal shield comprising:~~

~~a conforming perimeter for fitting in a retaining manner along the cross-sectional wall of the ear canal; and~~

~~a central porous member for air ventilation with respect to said hearing device,
and having pores sized to prevent penetration of fluids and solids therethrough.~~

Claims 14-25 (Cancelled)